

THE LEISURE HOUR.

BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,
AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND.—*Courier.*



"IMMEDIATE."

NINE-TENTHS OF THE LAW.

CHAPTER XIX.—SUSPENSE.

Through days of sorrow and of mirth,
Through days of death and days of birth,
Through every swift vicissitude
Of changeful time, unchanged it stood;
And as if, like God, it all things saw,
It calmly repeats those words of awe,

"For ever—never!
Never—for ever!"

—*Longfellow.*

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AFTER Mrs. Chamberlain's visit to the Goshen, and the indelicate inspection of the house by the maid, for which her mistress was held responsible, it was understood to be a settled thing that the new steward intended to take their house and farm for himself, and that they would have to turn out. Billy Fidd, who had waited for Mrs. Chamberlain at a short distance from the house, walked in front of her all the way back to Windy Gorse, looking round at her from time to time, and muttering to himself,

PRICE ONE PENNY.

quite regardless, as before, of anything she said to him.

He told every one he met that she was mad—mad as an old bulldog, pointing to Mrs. Chamberlain, and speaking loud enough for her to hear him; and when at last he parted from her at the gate of her own house, he went his way to Dulborough and told every one there the same story, "Mrs. Chamberlain had been to see Mrs. Brownlow, and had come away mad—mad as an old bulldog."

The report soon spread, therefore, that there had been a dispute, or disturbance of some sort, between Mrs. Brownlow and the steward's wife. The former had told the latter a bit of her mind; for with all her meekness she would not like to be put upon, and, no doubt, "had a spirit" like other people. Every one sympathised with her; but the fact remained that the Brownlows would have to give up the Goshen: the steward had made up his mind to take it for himself, and there was nothing to hinder him, except the notice—that must be given, of course; not even the squire could turn a man out of his farm without due notice.

Mr. Brownlow, though he talked the matter over with his wife anxiously and often, never spoke of it to any one else; he had given his word, unasked, that he would not do so, and although Mrs. Chamberlain had frustrated his object in making such a promise by telling all her neighbours what was in contemplation, yet he would not depart from his resolve. Michael had not yet returned from Germany, and the result of his mission was not known. Lady-day was approaching; it would soon be seen whether the notice would be served or not, and whether, if served, the squire would come to the rescue and cause it to be set aside.

Meantime Mr. Brownlow and the steward met occasionally, but the subject uppermost in the mind of each of them was never mentioned. They greeted each other as usual at the church door on Sunday, Brownlow shaking hands with the steward solemnly, and looking him in the face the while, to his discomfort. The people noticed how friendly they appeared, Mr. Brownlow in particular; and even the vicar, who had begun to fear from what he had heard that there would be a feud between two of his leading parishioners, and that it would be his unpleasant duty to speak to them about it, smiled as he passed them, and felt reassured. The 25th of March arrived at last. This was the critical day; the day that must decide whether Mr. Chamberlain intended to persist in his selfish and oppressive resolve, or whether he had thought better of it.

Early in the morning of that day Michael arrived, having come down from London by a night train. He was in tolerably good spirits, and seemed to think that he had gained his point with the squire. Mr. Neville-Thornton had told him he was to do as he liked about the Goshen; his father could remain there if he chose. He had agreed with him that he was to take the land at Windy Gorse off Chamberlain's hands, and to leave him the house.

Mrs. Brownlow was delighted, and asked a great many questions as to how the squire received him, and what he had said.

"Have you got it in black and white?" his father asked.

Michael was compelled to admit that he had been disappointed in that particular. He expected a letter, however, by post. The squire had gone away

in a hurry; he had promised to write, but omitted doing so. They should be sure to hear in a day or two, he thought.

But his father doubted.

"I would have taken the old squire's word for anything," he said, "but this is a new man. He promised you should have the letter to bring back with you, you say, and he went off without giving it you. If he breaks his word in that fashion I fear he is not to be trusted. He must have had a reason for slipping off like that while you were out of the way. You ought not to have left him. What were you thinking of?"

Michael confessed that he had been looking at Dr. Kaltmann's scientific contrivances for regulating the weather, etc.

"I might have guessed as much," said his father. "A grain of common-sense would have been better at such a time than all your science. I fear you have not done much good, Michael."

Michael felt not a little crestfallen, but tried to keep alive his hope that a letter would presently arrive, confirming the promises which had been made by word of mouth. He was not very sanguine, however. The squire had been so off-hand and "don't-care" in his manner and language, that it was but too probable that he had only been putting him off in order to escape his importunity.

At ten o'clock a letter was brought to the door, where Lizzie happened to be on the look-out. She would have retired, supposing it to be the dreaded notice, but the messenger made signs to her to stop; and with some hesitation she put out her hand to receive it.

Her heart beat quickly when she saw the handwriting. She knew it very well; but the letter was addressed to herself, and she had never seen her own name written in those characters before. The postmark was Cambridge, and it was sealed with the crest of the Nevilles. What could Mr. Arthur Neville be writing to her about? Something urgent, too, it must be, for the word "immediate" was upon the letter. She heard her father's voice not far off, and instinctively thrust the letter into her pocket. She could show it to him, of course, after she had read it, or to her mother. She did not want to hide anything from her parents; but there could be no reason why she should not read it first. It was strange that he should write to her. They had not met since that evening when she had opened the Bible for her father at the lesson for the day, and Mr. Arthur had fancied that she had selected the chapter as an expression of her interest in him, and with a view to guide him in the choice of a profession. He had pressed her hand, addressing her as "Lizzie," and had asked her what calling she would herself have chosen for him. She had often thought of it since. It was strange that he should have made such a mistake about the selection of the chapter—strange that he should have asked her such a question. He had written to her father on business two or three times since, and had always sent her a kind message, but that was not to be wondered at. Now he had written to herself, and the letter was important—immediate. What could it mean?

It was a long time before she could find an opportunity of reading it. Alone in her room, half hidden by a curtain, she at length, with a trembling hand, broke the seal.

Yes, it was important; but not quite in the sense

which she had imagined. It was kind, earnest, and even affectionate in tone; and there were some expressions in it which she would not have wished any one else to see; but the main object of the letter was business.

Mr. Arthur had heard, of course, of the difficulty which had arisen between Chamberlain and her father. He had not attached much importance to it at first, not thinking it possible that the steward would endeavour to take possession of the Goshen without Mr. Brownlow's consent. He had looked upon it only as a scheme started by Mrs. Chamberlain which would come to nothing. But he had been told lately that there was really a danger that Mr. Brownlow and his family might be turned out of their home. He could hardly believe it yet; but, as quarter-day was so near at hand, and they might be expecting to receive a notice, he thought it would set Lizzie's mind at rest to know that he had written to his brother a few days ago, urging him to write at once to Chamberlain on the subject. He had had no reply to his letter, but he felt sure that he would not allow the act of oppression to take place; and that, even if the notice should come, it would be recalled. The letter was intended for herself, and the writer would prefer that other members of the family should not be informed of the liberty which he had taken in interfering with their concerns; but if the notice were served, and they were distressed about it, she might assure herself, and also tell them, that he would not rest till he had prevailed with his brother to prevent its being carried out.

Lizzie Brownlow was in some doubt whether she should at once communicate the contents of this letter to her mother or not. The hope which they all seemed to entertain, that the attempt to dispossess them of their home would not be persisted in, decided her to wait till the result should be known, and for the present, at all events, she kept it to herself.

As the day wore on and no notice arrived, Mr. Brownlow, who kept within easy reach of his own door, began almost to think that the steward had indeed repented of his purpose.

"If he had meant to give me notice," he said to his wife, "I wonder he did not do it sooner in order to make sure. Any time before the 25th would have done, you know, but a day or an hour after it would be too late. If the notice is not served to-day we shall be safe for a year and a half, and there is no knowing what may happen before in that time."

Again and again, as the hours went on, Mr. Brownlow came to the window of the dairy, where his wife was busy, and gave utterance to his conjectures and his hopes.

"Mr. Neville has perhaps written to Chamberlain and told him not to serve the notice. Michael's journey may have done some good after all. It would save Mrs. Chamberlain the mortification of being told she could not have the house, and it would answer our purpose just as well as if he had written to us and you had got the letter to flourish in her face."

"I should not have made that use of it, John."

"No; but some people would, and Mr. Neville may have thought so. It was better to write to Chamberlain."

Mrs. Brownlow would have liked to believe that the squire had written as her husband suggested, but could not think so: neither did he, she felt sure.

"It is so unusual," Brownlow said, "when anything of this sort has to be done, to put it off till the last moment. I do begin to think that Chamberlain has thought better of it. He is not such a hard sort of man as people fancy; he has a heart, like most of us, and a conscience too."

Mrs. Brownlow received all that her husband said in silence, or answered him only with a monosyllable. If Mr. Chamberlain alone had been concerned, she might have shared Mr. Brownlow's hopes; but she could not forget her interview with Mrs. Chamberlain. She could see her still, scrutinising the apartment with a hungry eye, while she sat and talked to her, or turning her head and stretching her neck to look along the passage and up the staircase. She thought of Spilby prying into the rooms upstairs, and felt that these two women had been taking the measure of the house inside and out, and planning what should be done with it, as if it had already been their own. She felt with positive assurance that Mrs. Chamberlain coveted her house, and had resolved to have it. No, she thought to herself; Mr. Chamberlain might repent, Mrs. Chamberlain, never! Never, at least, till she had gained her point, and then repentance, if it came at all, would be too late; the mischief would be done.

Nevertheless, when the shadows began to lengthen and the sun had already approached its lower limb, very near to the summit of Windy Gorse, behind which at this season of the year it set, when the lowing of the cattle was heard as they were driven home, and the rattling of the chains upon the horses returning from the fields, and Mr. Brownlow drew near for the fourth or fifth time that day, and repeated his conjectures about the squire's letter and the notice which had not been served yet, and which he really began to think now would not be served at all, Mrs. Brownlow could not keep down the rising hope that it might turn out as he said. Mrs. Chamberlain was but a woman, and could not have everything her own way; but then, too, Mr. Chamberlain was but a man; there was the difficulty. A few hours at the most would decide the question now; and Mrs. Brownlow cast an anxious glance along the road which was already beginning to grow dark, and taking her husband by the arm, closed the door and led him into the room, the large parlour which Mrs. Chamberlain had admired, and to the hearth, the quaint old pictured hearth, which Mrs. Chamberlain had despised.

Michael came in presently. He had been taking a walk round by Windy Gorse and Rushy Pastures. He expected to have those farms in his own hands whatever happened about the Goshen, and he had been planning what he would do with them. He sat down by the hearth and looked first at his father and then at his mother, inquiringly.

"No notice yet, Michael," his mother said.

"I wonder at that," said Michael. "Chamberlain has been away in London, I believe; but he was to have returned last night. Any way, he would have been sure to leave the notice, with orders for its delivery. I expect the squire has written to him and stopped it. That's what I have been thinking of all day."

Mr. Brownlow did not deny that he had been cherishing the same hope.

"The notice may come yet," said Mrs. Brownlow, getting more anxious as the day approached its close.

"I hope not; I think not," said her husband. "I do really believe that Chamberlain has thought better of it. He could not make up his mind to do it when it came to the point. I fancied I saw it in his face last Sunday when I shook hands with him at the church door, with all the neighbours looking on. Did you observe him?"

"Yes," Mrs. Brownlow answered. "I thought he looked rather ashamed of himself, did not you, Lizzie?"

"I thought he looked angry and annoyed," said Lizzie, being thus appealed to.

"Angry at my shaking hands with him?"

"Yes; and Mrs. Chamberlain touched him with her parasol, and hastened him away. She looked angry too."

"You can't propitiate a man by shaking hands with him in public, father," said Michael.

"Especially when he knows he doesn't deserve it," Mrs. Brownlow interposed; "and that everybody else thinks so."

"I did not expect to propitiate him—only to let him feel that I bore him no malice. If I receive the notice to-night I shall shake hands with him next Sunday all the same."

"And he will be more vexed than ever if you do."

"I can't help that," said Brownlow. "However badly he may behave to me, I shall try to do him all the good I can, if only to make him feel it. By so doing we shall heap coals of fire on his head."

"I don't think that is quite what the Scripture means, though, is it, dear?" Mrs. Brownlow asked.

"It is as good as he deserves, and better," Michael answered.

Supper-time came, and then prayers, and after that the house was shut up as usual. It was with a feeling of relief that they heard the bar put up at the door, though they "might have to take it down again yet," Mrs. Brownlow remarked.

"I should not take it down for anybody," said Michael. "They have no right to bring notices or anything else after the house is shut up."

"In that case," said his father, "it would have been prudent to have shut up earlier."

"I doubt whether a notice can be legally served after sunset," Michael suggested.

"I don't know how that may be—whether the day ends at sunset or at midnight according to the lawyers."

"The evening and the morning make the day in Scripture," Mrs. Brownlow remarked; "even now we talk of a *se'night* and a *fortnight*. The day ends at sunset, according to the Scriptures."

"I don't suppose the lawyers take much notice of the Scriptures," said Michael, laughing. "They don't go by the Scriptures."

"More's the pity," his mother answered; "if they did we should be safe by this time."

"I don't know but what we are safe," said Michael. "The time for serving notices ends either at sunset or at midnight, but I am not sure which. Sunset is long past, and midnight will soon be here. One or other of them must be the time," he repeated, "but I'm sure I don't know which."

"That don't belong to science, I suppose, Michael?" said his father, laughing.

The smile faded from his lips the next moment.

"Hark!" he exclaimed. "Did you not hear the gate swing?"

They listened for some minutes expecting to hear

footsteps outside, but no sound was audible. Mrs. Brownlow put down her work-basket which she had been preparing to carry upstairs, and resumed her knitting—a very unusual thing with her at that late hour.

"I'll sit up a little longer," she said. "I don't feel as if I could go to bed just yet. You must be tired, Michael, after your journey; you can go, and Lizzie too."

Neither Michael nor Lizzie felt disposed to retire; they were all restless and anxious, and agreed to sit up till twelve o'clock. There was a tall eight-day clock at the end of the room in an oak case, with a brass face tarnished by time. It had stood in the same place as long as any of them could remember, and regulated all the movements of the establishment. It went accurately, though it was always a quarter of an hour or so before the church clock, a fact which was referred to with just a shade of dissatisfaction at that crisis. When it struck the hours it began with a solemn murmur like the grinding of coffee, which continued till the last stroke sounded on the bell, and then ceased suddenly. They liked to hear this old familiar voice, which was of a graver tone and more in character with the announcement of the continual passing of time than the sharp whirl and tinkle of modern clocks.

They were so used to it and had listened to it so often in seasons of sorrow and of joy, in watchings of the night, in their happiest social gatherings, and in the every-day routine of their quiet and generally uneventful life, that it seemed to them like the voice of an old friend expressing a kind of sympathy with them both in their pleasures and their cares. Often indeed this lifeless piece of mechanism would suggest thoughts of real and practical value to their minds. Mrs. Brownlow could not look upon it in any time of trouble without remembering how she had done so on former occasions, when she had said in the evening, "Would God it were morning," and in the morning, "Would God it were evening." This was a standing witness against her for many fears which had proved groundless, and a memorial of many unexpected deliverances and many unhopied-for answers to her prayers.

As the usual murmuring sound began they counted the strokes upon the bell, and turned as if with one accord, to look at the clock-face, and when it had ceased Mrs. Brownlow said, with a little sigh, "Eleven! Only one hour more!"

"And a quarter," Michael added.

Then he told them about the clock at Dr. Kaltmann's, how it had disturbed him in the night by calling out *dry* and *fear*, and how it had answered the doctor in the morning, denying its maker, as he said.

They were all amused at the account of his adventures, and Mr. Brownlow said, with a twinkle in his eye, "You are fond of science, Michael; it would just suit you, such a house as that?"

To which Michael answered that he did not care much about it; that was not the sort of science he went in for.

Such conversation helped to pass the time, but as midnight drew near they all grew silent. They had made up their minds now that there would be no notice served; but they sat before the fire watching the embers, and glancing from time to time at their old friend across the room, anxious to hear him speak once more before they went to bed. Presently the "warning" was given, and soon afterwards the

grinding began, and then the twelve strokes upon the bell, which they all counted.

"A quarter of an hour yet, father!" said Michael. "Don't be too confident; a quarter of an hour yet!"

Going to the window he opened it. It was a quiet night, and the church clock would no doubt be heard through the stillness. It was the longest quarter of an hour they had ever experienced. The church clock must have stopped, they thought, as it did sometimes. But no! It sounded out at last, clear and distinct. Midnight was past!

"That's the sweetest sound I have heard this many a day," said Michael. "Hoorah, father; it's all right. I didn't go to Germany for nothing. The squire wrote to Chamberlain, you may be certain. That stopped him. Nothing else would."

"I'm not so sure of that," his father answered. "I believe it's Chamberlain's own doing. He changed his mind. I thought he would. I never quite believed he would have the heart to turn us out. I am glad I shook hands with him. I'll go to him to-morrow morning and thank him."

"Yes," Mrs. Brownlow replied; "but let us thank God first. It is He who orders all things, and men's hearts are in His power. It's a great load off my mind. Thank God, I say, Michael; for it is His doing."

Her voice was choked with emotion, and when her son stooped to kiss her, bidding her good-night, she turned away her face, wiping the tears from her eyes.

Lizzie had also turned away her face. She was at the open window, listening to the sound of the church bell long after its last vibrations had died away. It was a very musical bell, certainly. She had often thought so before; but it seemed sweeter than ever just now. She also had her theory as to the influence which had prevailed to stay the steward's hand, and to preserve them from being turned out of their house and farm; but she did not mention it to any one; her hand rested on her bosom, and upon a letter hidden within the folds of her dress. When she at length turned round she wished them all good-night, and went away in haste to her room.

BIBLE LESSONS FOR EVERY-DAY LIFE.

BY THE REV. HARRY JONES, M.A., RECTOR OF ST. GEORGE'S-IN-THE-EAST.

HUMILITY.

"Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."—*Luke xiv. 11.*

THIS great saying of our Lord's is based upon a small matter. We find that on one Sabbath day He was invited to eat meat, to dine, as we should put it, at the house of a chief Pharisee—a great man it would seem in his way. And on this occasion he seems to have given an unusually grand entertainment.

The picture which we have of Jesus in this scene is perhaps unique. He is now among the richer folk. Our most familiar conception of Him is, on the contrary, of one surrounded by what we call the poorer sort of people. He was brought up in a carpenter's household, and He associated Himself with the fishermen of Galilee.

His contact with what we call the upper classes of society seems to have been restricted to such occasions as when He was sent for to heal the nobleman's son.

When He first spoke publicly in the synagogue in His own country resentment was expressed at what was counted his presumption in putting himself forward. How knoweth this man letters, having never learned? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James and Joses and of Juda and Simon? And are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him.

On the occasion before us, however, Jesus was present at the house of a chief Pharisee.

We have a short description of the scene, but it is a touch which tells us much.

There were, it seems, many guests, and the same petty stratagems and jealousies which are now sometimes not altogether unknown at a large entertainment given by a great man. People like their neighbours to think that they are on intimate or honoured

terms with my lord. Some of the guests invited with Jesus were obviously anxious to appear as particular friends of their distinguished host.

We are told that Jesus marked how they chose out the chief rooms. Upon this He puts forth a parable to them that were bidden, ending thus: "Go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee."

Here, of course, "room" means "place." We use the word in the same sense when we say "there is no room to sit down." The word worship, too, means merely honour. We retain this meaning of it also when we speak of a magistrate as "his worship" or "his honour."

Now it is possible that we may think the advice of our Lord to the guests in the parable to concern a very worldly subject. But still it was given. And He founds a great saying upon it. "Every one that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

These words of Jesus teach us the excellence of humility. They are always true. They apply to this present life, the life which now is; and they apply to the life which is to come. They are true as concerns our relation to God and as concerns our relation to man.

Let me pause to remark that in using the word humility I attach a higher sense to it than some perhaps would. I use the word in its best sense. Humility is not mere cap-in-hand deference. That may be no more than mean obsequiousness. True humility is not servility. It respects self as much as others. It is inseparable from a due knowledge of

ourselves; and, sooner or later, before men and God, he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

How is it among men? To put the question in the coarsest form, does it really answer to pretend to be what we are not, and what we know we are not?

It may seem to answer sometimes at first. The pushing guest in the parable did sit for a little while in the best place, and those who sat at meat with him were for the minute really deceived. They thought he deserved it. But he was found out in a short time.

Depend upon it, the success of sheer imposition never lasts very long. Boasters and cheats are continually being exposed, and begin with shame to take the lowest place.

It is so in all kinds of business and work. A man may profess to be an able-bodied seaman, fit to reef, steer, and the like, but if he shrinks from going aloft with the rest to shorten sail in rough weather, down comes his credit with his mates. A farm labourer may give out that he can draw a straight furrow, but his fellows will wait to see what he can do when he gets behind the plough.

A man may affirm that he is excellent in this or that matter, but the world is a shrewd judge, and, in time, though it may pronounce a rough verdict, generally returns a true one. As years go on, those who talk arrogantly, and give themselves airs, have to come down from their pedestal, while such as are fit to fill higher posts than they assume are exalted.

The biographies of many distinguished men prove this. Which of them were eminent at first? But from time to time they hear the summons, "Friend, go up higher."

There are, of course, some who do not get or show their powers even when they have reached the age when men begin to be tested as men. They ripen slowly. And there are, of course, some whose genuine merit the world is slow to acknowledge, merely because their merit, though genuine, is not of a kind to be readily and generally seen. Brilliant services are indeed soon rewarded. Even obscure genius and worth is not without honour from those who perceive it. The world is probably a fairer place than it is often said to be, and, on the whole, the verdicts of mankind are good. Most of the grumbling about its indifference and ingratitude comes from those to whom we have really nothing to be grateful for, and those who live and pass away in obscurity are probably fit for nothing else.

They might console themselves with thinking that a higher position would by no means bring happiness to them. It is not only just but kind to let the right people stay in the right place. The honest ploughman would be by no means pleased if he were driven to the field in the squire's carriage, and the able-bodied seaman would find himself uncomfortably out of place in the admiral's cabin. The honourable man in the parable, who was picked from the crowd of guests, was worthy, or the master would not have singled him out. But he would not honour himself.

The pith of the matter is, "Let another man praise thee; and not thine own mouth." "A stone that is fit for the wall is not left in the way." You may or may not be made for eminence, but if you are you will reach it in some measure. At any rate, "ever sit in your own place, and no man can make you rise."

Thus much for what we may call the worldly application of our text. Among men, in their dealings with one another, "he that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

We have next to notice that this is a principle which reaches beyond the things of earth into those of the kingdom of heaven, if, indeed, these things can ever be really disentangled.

For genuine humility, which goes along with self-respect, is a chief Christian grace. It is a great and not a small thing. Of course nothing is easier than to go down upon our knees, recite words of confession, and call ourselves miserable sinners out of a book. It is easy to acquire such a habit, and I am far from saying that it cannot be unattended by some wholesome effect. But it is not so easy to let the sense of our shortcomings and faults ripen in our hearts, not so as to crush us, not so as to confuse us, but to ripen healthily, so as to give us an honest appetite for spiritual life and light.

This is not so easy—yet Christian humility, which helps us to see ourselves, is a condition of heaven. It is an earnest of salvation. It sets us in a right attitude towards God and man.

For Christian humility has a twofold operation. It helps us to receive God's grace, and it brings forth love towards our brother.

It leads to God. I will illustrate my meaning by another parable of our Lord's, that of the Prodigal Son. The prodigal in the parable fell lower and lower as long as he trusted to his own shifts, but when he perceived the case he was in he approached the father, who saw him while he was yet a long way off. Sullen obstinacy or false pride dressed him in the swineherd's rags. Honest humility led to the ring, the best robe, and the fatted calf. Passers-by in those Eastern fields might have thought the man humbled as he sat amongst the swine. But outward wretchedness is no sign of real humility. Jesus did not say, He that is humbled, but He that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

As long as a man nurses his sorrow, takes a delight in cherishing the belief that he is ill-used, neglected by God and man, he is in no state to receive the comfort that God gives. God is no mere healer of grievances. A man may complain through life, and die with only a feeling of bitterness towards earth and heaven. It is the honest thought, "I am unworthy;" it is the deep perception of that which opens the door for God's grace. Then the man rises with strength stronger than man's, and a hope which eye hath not seen nor ear heard.

Then, too, he will show forth the real worth and strength of humility among men. Then he can lead the Christian life. Then he can do good. It is of no use trying to exhibit the paces of piety without a radical humbling of ourselves before God. It is of no use either trying to force ourselves into humility in the hope that we may make something by it. We may be moved by a wish to rise which is one of pure selfishness.

The prodigal in the parable did not calculate that his repentance would lead to such honour as he received. He, a son, was willing to take a very humble place in his father's household. And in like manner the truly humble man humbles himself before God with no mere eye to exaltation. His only business and desire is to see himself as he is, and leave God to do the rest, believing that it is God's

Spirit which must work in him if he is to rise above himself.

Moreover, we may have a quick eye for the sin and evil which we see around us, we may desire to and try to contend against it, but unless our might grows out of our humility, it will be only the wrath of man which worketh not the righteousness of God. To try to do good without humility is to defy Him who said, "I am among you as he that serveth." It is, indeed, to incur successive failures, perpetual disappointments; for it is a law of God, never to be set aside in His kingdom, that "whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased."

But we may ask, How is this saving, this effective humility, to be got?

It is hard to give receipts for making such a grace as this. Thus much, however, may be said. The root of this potent humility is self-knowledge. And I think that no man can look honestly within himself and be satisfied. Of course, there will be something to cheer him. None are wholly bad, with no spark of what is true and tender in their hearts. It is a mistake; it is wrong to say so. No one really believes it. The possibility of godliness exists in many who seem to be given over to the devil. It was for this reason that Christ said He had come to seek and save those that were lost.

And yet in the conscience of the best among us there is enough to humble him. He who really knows himself cannot be proud. And therefore it is the main object of the devil to hide ourselves from ourselves. For there is enough in every one to make him tremble. There are dark shadows of an evil spirit which sometimes draw terribly near, which, if not seen to do so at the time, are seen to have done so afterwards, when an hour of reflection arrives. Glimpses of a mean disposition towards anger, indolence, and vanity, possibilities of offence and inclinations to sin, which, when we can look at them from a little distance, distress, or even startle us. From indulgence in which, perhaps, we have been plucked back we hardly know how. Some power not our own has saved us.

Deliverance from a fall is not mere matter of self-congratulation. It betrays how near we have been to what we afterwards see was a precipice. A dangerous path can make the traveller shudder even when he has traversed it in safety. He trembles when he thinks of it, and of how near he was to the edge, and of what might have been. So some can recall deliverance from the commission of a sin, and afterwards see how close they were to grievous shame.

But the remembrance or perception of narrow escapes are not the only reflections to sober and humble us. There are few—nay, there are none—without the consciousness of having in some measure yielded to temptation. Some, indeed, are told by memory of very distinct acts of sin, and see shameful lines written in the history of their past lives, which, though perhaps blotted out, still show as blots.

Then there is that besetting sin, that infirmity of temper, that phase of sensuousness, that weak point which so often spoils our self-conceit. Everyone, though he may not have kept it before him, has had some glimpses of its dangerousness, and of the damnable mischief which it might do.

Well, if it calmly humble us. Well, if instead of being merely provoked and angry with ourselves, we confess the imperfection, and look for life through

Him who is without sin, and whose sustaining Spirit pervades the world of men, and saves those who will use it.

For the sense of escapes, the sense of having sinned in times past, the sense of difficulty in resisting temptation now, the stings of remembrance and the present plague of our infirmity, whatever it may be; all this is intended to lead us to God, to make us feel that man, by himself, wants something which he cannot get from man, in order that he may live and act aright.

It is intended to promote that honest humility which must be before we can be lifted up by the power of our Father which is in heaven. There is a power, mysterious, undefinable, which can exalt such as are thus humble into safety and strength. We may feel that we are stayed upon one who is Almighty, whom we may love with love that casteth out fear, and whom we may serve among men by the aid of His Spirit; who will help and comfort us if we wish to see ourselves as we are, and rise, be exalted, not for the sake of self-gratification, but because we wish to be better and do better than we are and do.

Let us pray to be delivered from the selfish spirit of human isolation, propped up by plausible excuses to ourselves, with our eyes purposely shut to that which is disagreeably humiliating in us. Let us rather honestly look at our lives and motives as they are. Then, and then only, shall we be in the way to know the meaning of that true exaltation which is the inheritance of man, but which he cannot enjoy if he thinks that he can stand by, and altogether take care of, himself.

This humbling of ourselves before God leads to the profound perception of the Gospel of Christ, that it is the will of God, not that we should suffer for guilt, but be delivered from evil. That, however we may have sinned, however weak we may be, He pardons and revives us. That, in whatever measure we may have failed or fallen, if we admit the failure or the fall, He yet secures our place in the kingdom of heaven with great love, as that of a Father to His children, who cast their cares upon Him. That, if we humble ourselves before God, before the great Power which, through our conscience, points out the evil that is within us, as the great scrutiny arrives, as we are arraigned before the all-seeing Judge who sits upon the great white throne of truth, if we have been honest in our prayers and confessions of sin, there is no fear lest the Judge should mistake our humility and keep us low. Rather will He, with the great redeeming love shown in Christ, say unto us, in the best, the highest, and most sacred sense, "Friend, go up higher. Come, ye children, inherit the kingdom prepared for you. For he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

SIR JOHN GILBERT, R.A.

TO most of our readers the name of Sir John Gilbert, R.A., will be familiar, but many of them will be surprised to learn that this distinguished artist, eminent as a draughtsman on wood, President of the Society of Painters in Water Colours, and Royal Academician, scarcely received any instruction in art, and is a self-taught, as well as a self-made man.

Sir John Gilbert was born at Blackheath in 1817,

and he was placed by his father in a City office, with the intention that he should become a man of business. Commercial affairs, however, were not to his taste, and he occupied every spare moment in covering sheets of paper with sketches of the characters which came under his notice. Young and old, rich and poor, all were committed to that wonderful memory which in later years poured forth such a profusion of designs as has never been equalled by any other artist for range, for delicate perception of character, and for the power of expressing the most varied emotions in the simplest manner. During the uncongenial hours which were passed at the desk, Gilbert, without a doubt, laid in a great part of the knowledge which he used to such excellent purpose in subsequent years.

Success by no means came all at once, and he had his share of disappointments. Though now an Academician, he failed to get into the Academy schools as a student, and had to trust to himself for advancement. Before long he gained employment as a draughtsman on wood, and his very earliest drawings on wood were made for the publications of the Religious Tract Society. It is especially gratifying to be able to remark in this periodical that not only were Sir John's earliest designs made for the Society, but that he continued to give us assistance until he abandoned this branch of his work; and more than this, we know that he has repeatedly expressed the pleasure and satisfaction which this hearty appreciation gave him at a time when patronage was most useful.

When business began to come in plentifully, Gilbert buckled-to and worked as few men ever do. The volumes of the "Illustrated London News" for the years 1848-1854 testify to his immense industry, and those who are able to recognise his work will be astounded at the large number of drawings which he contributed to that journal in the above-mentioned years. These, however, formed but a small part of his work. During this time he was almost the sole draughtsman and the acknowledged mainstay of at least a dozen weekly or monthly magazines, and besides fulfilling his engagements with these publications with the most praiseworthy punctuality and loyalty, he also produced hundreds—nay, even thousands—of drawings in illustration of every department of literature. Romances, works of travel, collections of poetry, books for the young and for the old, tracts, handbills, encyclopædias, and Christmas books were all enriched by his fertile pencil.

Whilst executing all this work, Gilbert carried on his studies in water-colour and in oil, and made his mark in each department. He was elected Associate of the Society of Painters in Water-colours in 1852, a Member in the following year, and President of the Society in 1871. At the Academy his works did not for a long time receive the attention that they merited at the hands of the Hanging Committees, and he ceased to contribute to the Academy, and displayed his work in oil at the Exhibitions of the British Institution. In 1872 he was elected Associate of the Academy, almost simultaneously was knighted by her Majesty in recognition of his distinguished attainments, and in 1876 was made full R.A.

In his work in oil and in water-colour, Sir John Gilbert's characteristic dash and force are displayed as much as in his drawings on wood. His colour is vigorous, harmonious, and often brilliant. Amongst the great masters, Rubens, Rembrandt, and Velas-

quez have most largely influenced him, especially Rubens. This will be felt by any one standing before the two great masterpieces in Antwerp Cathedral. It would not, however, be just to say that Gilbert has based his colour in oil upon that of Rubens, or his water-colour manner upon that of David Cox, though there are occasional passages in his work which recall both the colouring and the methods of these two great artists.

It concerns us to speak more of Gilbert as a draughtsman on wood than it does as a painter. Only those who have been personally concerned in the production of illustrated literature during the last thirty years can appreciate the great service which he has rendered, and the great part which he has taken, in the development of the art of wood engraving. To convey to the general reader some idea of the important part that he has played, it would be necessary to trace a sketch of the art from its beginnings to the present time. This we cannot now do. But we state it as our entire conviction that illustrated periodical literature is under immense obligation to him, and that the illustrated periodical literature of the present time would scarcely have been brought into existence except for him. At the busy time of which we have spoken, had Gilbert broken down, there would have been no one to replace him. The continuance of many magazines and periodicals was possible only by his assistance, and upon the strength of his assistance many new magazines and journals were started. By the time he abandoned drawing on wood other artists had been attracted to the professional pursuit of this branch of art; but the dismay which his retirement caused is still fresh in the minds of many, for he did as much per day as any ten ordinary men.

To our younger readers in particular we especially point out that this extraordinary productiveness was not due to advantages of birth or education. It was due to perseverance and to practice, and eventually this vast experience gave him a degree of facility in composition and execution such as has seldom, if ever, been equalled. As a boy, the writer of this notice has often waited whilst Gilbert has made a drawing for some magazine or other publication. The ms. has been read, the composition determined upon, and the drawing executed in less time than most artists would find necessary for the sake of reading the ms. alone. Amongst the most remarkable illustrations with which Gilbert's name is connected is one which appeared in the "Illustrated London News" of the Charge at Balaclava. The original sketch by "a special" arrived at the office, and was sent down to Gilbert with a page-size block. The messenger waited whilst the drawing was being made, and Gilbert completed it, with its hundreds of figures, in three hours.

The facility and certainty with which Gilbert turned out his designs contributed one element of his success. The fact that his drawings were the most suitable which have ever been produced for the purposes of the wood engraver was at least equally potent in bringing custom to him. Even in his most hurried moments his drawings were never sloppy. They were never overcrowded with unnecessary detail, nor were they ever scamped. And besides this, they were drawn with the utmost decision, and it was impossible to mistake his meaning. The value of this to the engraver cannot be overrated. It saves his time and temper,

and renders his work more profitable to him. In this precious quality no draughtsman on wood, with the single exception, perhaps, of Sir Noel Paton, has ever approached Gilbert. Nothing was muddled and rubbed out, and put in afresh. The crispness of the handling and firmness of his touch was marvellous—most marvellous in the faces, where the difference of a hair's-breadth one way or another will completely alter the expression. It is greatly to be

been a favourite with women and children. Many a lad now growing up into life can speak of kindly hints and advice which he has given, and many will long remember his regular and agreeable features and dignified presence, reminding one of those courtly knights whom he has so often represented.

In future times the name of Sir John Gilbert will be found amongst those who will be considered most worthy of being remembered out of all of the British



John Gilbert

regretted that none of these original drawings on the wood are now in existence, for they would have served as admirable models for future draughtsmen, and would, perhaps, have moderated the conceit of some artists who have little to be conceited about.

We have hitherto spoken of Sir John Gilbert in regard to his admirable artistic qualities alone, but we cannot terminate this brief notice of his career without adverting to his not less admirable business qualities. His promise was sacred and his word inviolable. He could be, and *was*, relied upon; and the distressing irregularity and unpunctuality which are too often regarded as necessary accompaniments of an artistic life were never feared with him. Gracious and courteous in manner, Sir John has ever

attracted attention for their strong individuality, for their bold treatment, for their masterly handling, and for their powerful and often brilliant colour. Whatever exception may be taken to his draughtsmanship, his work will be pointed to as having exerted a larger influence upon illustrated literature in the nineteenth century than has been exercised by any other artist, and his name will be associated in the mind of art-students with the recent great development of wood engraving in the same manner as the names of Durer and Bewicke are with its advancement at an earlier period. We trust that he may be long spared to enjoy the fruits of his labours.



THE TROUBLES OF A CHINAMAN.

BY JULES VERNE.

CHAPTER IX.—SUSPENSE.

AT the office of the Centenarian, on the following morning, William Biddulph had an interview with the two detectives whom he had commissioned to keep a watch over his new client.

"Last evening," Craig was saying, "we followed him for a long walk into the country."

"And certainly he had not the least appearance of being likely to put an end to himself," continued Fry.

"Well and strong as the bridge of Palikao," they answered in a breath.

Craig and Fry were cousins, and genuine Americans. Had they been the Siamese twins their identity could scarcely have been more complete; the same brains, the same thoughts, the same motives, and even the same stomachs seemed to belong to them both; their very arms and legs appeared to be at each other's disposal, and in speaking one of them almost invariably completed the sentence which the other had begun.

"No; I suppose you could not get into the house," said Biddulph.

The spies declared that they hardly thought that could be managed.

"And yet it ought to be done," continued the agent; "it will never answer for the company to lose two hundred thousand dollars, you will have to keep a good look-out upon this gentleman for a couple of months, and longer if he should renew his policy."

"There is a valet in the house," said Fry.

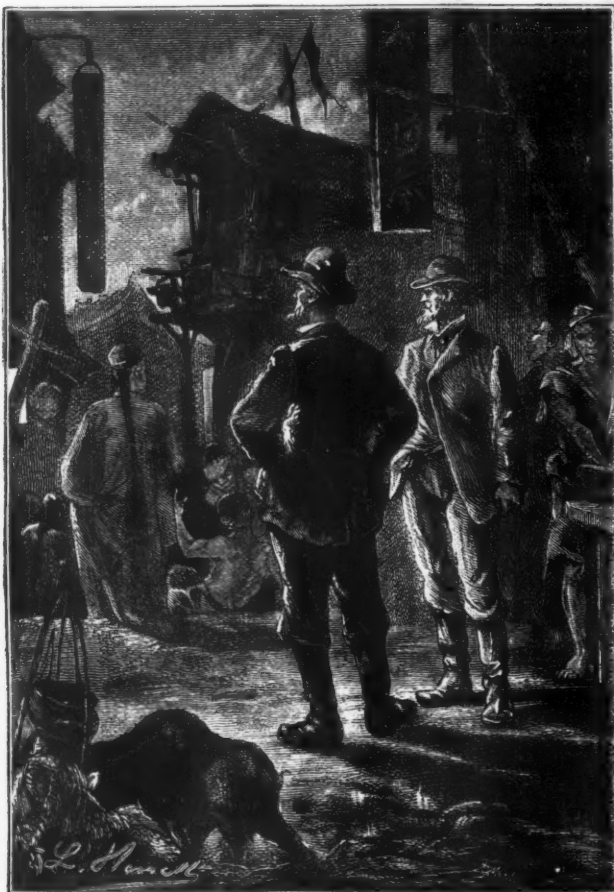
"Who probably could give some information of what goes on within," said Craig.

"Ay, get hold of him," replied Biddulph; "make him all the compliments that a Chinaman enjoys so well, bribe him with drink, or with money if necessary; you shall lose nothing by your pains."

Accordingly the two men put themselves as soon as possible in communication with Soon, who was nothing loth to accept either a glass of American drink or a present of a few taels.

By dint of inquiry a good many particulars were got out of him. Had his master lately exhibited any change in his manner? No, except that he had been rather more indulgent than usual to his valet. Had he any dangerous weapons in his possession? No, he had no arms whatever. How did he live? On food of the most ordinary kind. At what hour did he rise? In the fifth watch at daybreak. At what hour did he go to bed? The second watch, ever since Soon had been in his service, had been his hour for retiring. Did he appear preoccupied or distressed, like one weary of life? No, though he was never a man of exuberant spirits, he was never in the least gloomy; in fact, for the last day or two he had

been rather more cheerful than usual. Had he any poison in his possession that he would be likely to take? No; Soon thought it most unlikely; even that very morning, by his master's orders, he had flung away a lot of globules into the Wang-Poo simply because they might be dangerous



DETECTIVES.

"We kept pace with him all the way back to his own house," said Craig.

"But had no opportunity of getting inside," added Fry.

"And what about him this morning?" Biddulph asked.

The cross-examination did not elicit a single fact that could in any way arouse the fears of Biddulph. Never had the wealthy Kin-Fo appeared in a happier or more prosperous condition. Still Craig and Fry felt their professional reputation too much at stake to allow them to relax their vigilance, and having come to the conclusion that Kin-Fo was not likely to commit suicide in his own house, they followed him more perseveringly than ever when he left home; they took care, besides, to cultivate a closer intimacy with Soon, who was quite ready to talk freely enough with acquaintances at once so agreeable and so generous.

As for Kin-Fo himself, it would be too much to say that he had begun to have a real clinging to life now that he had determined to leave it, but the feeling of suspense had intertwined itself into his existence, and given rise to emotions to which he had hitherto been a stranger, and which began to thrill in his breast. He had hung, as it were, the sword of Damocles above his head, and it was in itself an excitement for him to know that it might fall at any moment.

Since the night on which they had entered into their contract, Kin-Fo and Wang had had no intercourse; perhaps the philosopher had been out, or perhaps he was confining himself to his own room, engaged in devising for fresh execution one of the various schemes of assassination with which his early experience as a Tai-Ping had made him familiar. Kin-Fo could only form his own conjecture about the way in which Wang was employing his time, but the result was that curiosity of a new and personal character was being awakened in his mind, and to Kin-Fo curiosity was a new sensation.

As hitherto, they both met at the same table, at meals, but their conversation on those occasions always turned upon the most ordinary and indifferent topics. There could be no doubt, however, that Wang had become somewhat gloomy and taciturn; there was an abstracted look in his eye that his spectacles, huge as they were, could not conceal; his appetite, ordinarily good, almost entirely failed him, the most delicate dishes and the costliest wines being of no avail to give him a proper enjoyment of his meals.

On the other hand, Kin-Fo seemed to relish every dish that came to table. The consequence was that his appetite wonderfully revived, and every day he not only made a good dinner, but digested it perfectly. It was, at least, quite evident that the secret use of poison was not the means by which Wang was seeking to bring about his end.

Wang had every facility for accomplishing the task he had undertaken; the door of Kin-Fo's bedroom was always open; either by day or by night he was free to enter, and could choose his own time for striking his victim, asleep or awake. In anticipation of being attacked in this way, Kin-Fo had so far considered the matter as to entertain the hope that any blow that might be struck might go straight to his heart.

So quickly, however, did Kin-Fo get accustomed to anticipations of this character that after a very

few nights he slept quite soundly, awaking each morning bright and refreshed.

After a time it occurred to him that perhaps Wang shrank from perpetrating the deed under a roof



A STARTLING INCIDENT.

where he had been so long and so hospitably entertained. To obviate this difficulty and to afford every chance, Kin-Fo would go long distances into the country, always choosing the most deserted roads; he would linger as late as the fourth watch in the most cut-throat quarters of the town, where murder might be committed with the utmost impunity; he would wander through the dark and narrow streets, jostled by drunkards until the early hours of the morning, when the bell of the muffin-man and his cry, "Man-toose," "Man-toose," heralded the dawn of day; but he ever returned from his peregrinations as safe and well as he had set out, quite unconscious that however capricious his movements, they had never ceased to be under the surveillance of the indefatigable cousins Craig and Fry.

If things were to go on in this fashion, Kin-Fo began to fear that he should grow so accustomed to the condition of living a precarious existence that all his old ennui must very soon return; as it was, hours would repeatedly elapse without the thought of his impending death ever crossing his mind at all.

An incident, however, occurred on the 12th of May which supplied a fresh excitement to his imagination.

Happening to pass the doorway of Wang's apartment, he caught sight of the philosopher cautiously feeling the edge of a poniard with his fingers; watching a moment longer, he saw him dip the weapon into a violet-coloured bottle of very suspicious appearance; another instant, and Wang was seen brandishing the poniard in the air, his countenance assuming an expression so ferocious that the blood seemed to mount into his very eyes.

"Ah! that's it, is it? very good!" said Kin-Fo, passing on his way without having been observed.

For the whole of the day Kin-Fo made a point of not leaving his own room, but Wang made no appearance. Night came on, and he went to bed; morning came, and he was still alive and well. Was it not provoking? Were not all his emotions going to waste? Wang was a procrastinator, why else did he suffer ten days to pass? What could make him dilly-dally in this way? No doubt the luxuries of Shang-Hai had enervated him; he had lost his nerve.

Wang, meanwhile, was becoming more gloomy and more restless than ever; he began to be perpetually wandering about the yamen, and it was noticed that he made repeated visits to the chamber where the costly coffin from Lai-Choo was deposited. Not long afterwards it was mentioned by Soon to his master that orders had been given for the coffin itself to be dusted, cleaned, and new varnished.

"He is making it all clean and comfortable for you, you see," said Soon, confidentially.

Three more days elapsed, and still nothing transpired. Was it possible that Wang was contemplating that the whole of the stipulated period should run out? Did he intend to postpone his action till the extreme limit of the time? The result of this, if it were so, would be that death at last must come as no surprise at all.

On the 15th a further significant fact came to Kin-Fo's knowledge. He had passed an unusually restless night, and at about six in the morning awoke from a distressing dream, in which he thought that

Prince Jen, the potentate of the infernal regions, had condemned him not to appear before him until the twelve hundredth moon should rise upon the Celestial Empire. This was to allot him a life of another century. Everything surely was conspiring to thwart him. It was, consequently, in no good mood that he rose that morning, and decidedly in a bad temper did Soon find him when he entered to give him his accustomed services at the toilet.

"Out of the room, you rascal, before I kick you out!"

The valet was somewhat taken aback by a greeting so different to what he had lately received from his master, but having something to communicate he did not retreat.

"Out of the room, I say!" repeated Kin-Fo.

"I was only going to say—" began Soon.

"Off, you scoundrel!" said Kin-Fo.

"That Wang—" continued the servant.

"Wang! well, what about Wang?" cried Kin-Fo, and he caught tight hold of Soon's pigtail.

Soon wriggled about in his master's grasp, in terror as to what fate was to befall his tail, but in reply to the repeated demand, said,

"He has ordered your coffin to be put into the Kiosk of Long Life!"

A sudden gleam of satisfaction spread itself over Kin-Fo's face.

"Is it really so?" he asked.

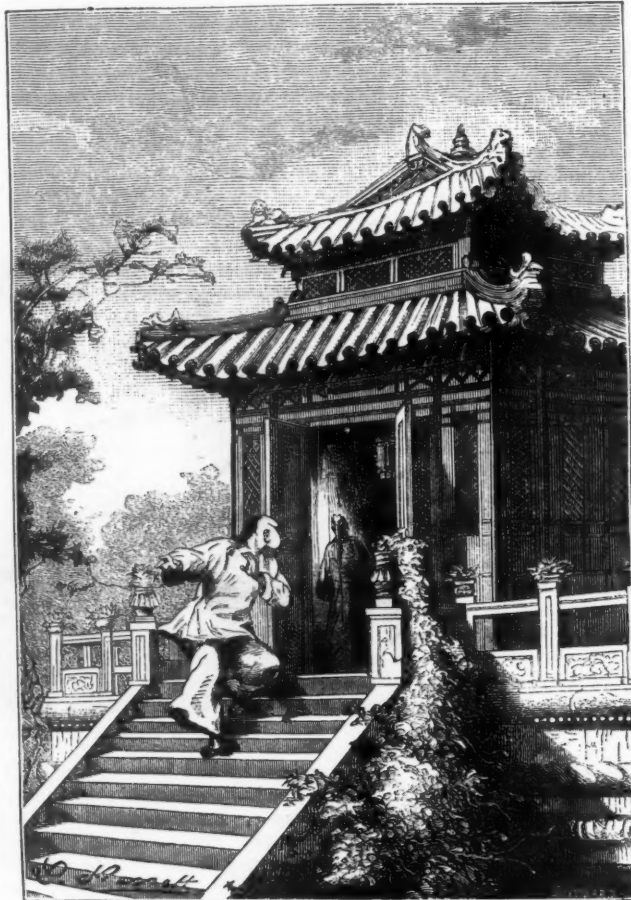
"The order is given," replied Soon.

"Here, my good fellow, are ten taels for you, go and see that the order is attended to."

Nothing could exceed Soon's astonishment; he hurried away, thinking to himself that if his master had gone mad, it was not a bad thing that his madness had taken a generous turn.

Conviction now came upon Kin-Fo's mind. Here was clear evidence that matters were coming to a crisis. No doubt Wang had come to the conclusion that he would kill him on the very spot where he had himself resolved to die. How long, how slow that day! the hands upon the clock scarce seemed to stir! but at last the shadows lengthened, and night brooded upon the yamen.

Kin-Fo came to the determination that he would



THE PAVILION OF LONG LIFE.

take up his quarters in the pavilion of Long Life. He entered as expecting never to come out alive. He flung himself upon a soft sofa, and there he lay and waited. In the still silence of the solitude he began to reflect; he thought of the unprofitableness of his past existence; he pondered on the weariness and *ennui* of his old career; poverty was no better than wealth; he thought upon La-oo; his attachment to her was a bright thing in his memory; even now his heart beat at the recollection of her love; but no! he was never going to involve her in his misery.

Thus passed the fourth watch, when nature, animate and inanimate, seems all at repose. Kin-Fo listened. His eye sought to penetrate the darkness. More than once he heard the creak of footsteps. More than once he was sure that a gentle hand was laid upon the door. A kind of longing mingled itself with a kind of dread. Why did he not fall asleep and so await in unconsciousness the approach of the Tai-Ping?

But the fourth watch passed, and the fifth watch dawned. Day was about to break, when suddenly the door of the pavilion was opened roughly.

"The time has come!" cried Kin-Fo, starting up. His life seemed concentrated in that single instant.

It was not Wang.

It was only Soon. He held a letter in his hand. The letter was marked "Urgent."

"I have brought it at once," said Soon.

Kin-Fo seized the letter; it bore the San Francisco postmark. One glance at the inside revealed its contents, and Kin-Fo rushed impetuously from the pavilion, shouting,

"Wang, Wang!"

He darted into the philosopher's apartment, but in a moment was out again, still calling at the top of his voice,

"Wang, Wang, Wang!"

But Wang was not to be found. His bed had never been slept in. The whole house was aroused; search was made in every quarter of the yamen; no trace of him was to be seen. It was only certain that Wang had gone!

CONJURERS' PROPERTIES.

II.

APPARENTLY inexhaustible are the borrowed hats that, under the wonderworker's tender care, develop an abnormal capacity; and his portfolios rival a co-operative store in the multiplicity and variety of their contents. Indeed, in some respects they surpass them, for we have not yet heard of the stores dealing in cannon-balls or babies!

From these receptacles come goblets, dolls, drums, doves, bonnets, Chinese lanterns, engravings, reticules, rabbits, bonbons, birds and cages, chandeliers, and children! Far more, indeed, comes out than by any possibility could ever have been stowed within at one time. Part of the puzzle lies in the fact that some of the above-named articles go into small compass until opened out, as they are when brought into the view of the audience. Thus Chinese lanterns lie flat; dolls collapse, being merely muslin on a wire framework; tins fit one within another; reticules are filled with other articles, that are handed out before they are produced; and cages are made

"practicable," to be subsequently opened out to most imposing dimensions; even cannon-balls prove amenable to reason, and flatten themselves without the assistance of a Monitor's sides. If the wizard produces several of these latter, you may take it that only one is genuine, and this the magician will carefully let fall that you may be made aware of its solidity. One other may be a spherical wooden shell, a portion of which will screw out, and the interior will then be discovered loaded with no worse explosives than bonbons and crackers. These the professor will distribute before showing the ball, which, in the first instance, he has raised from the *servante* into the hat by placing his second finger into a hole in it, specially made, crooking the finger, and so inserting the ball into the borrowed headgear. The remaining spheres are merely "dummies," circular wires covered with black cloth and lying flat in the hat, but plump as any undinged specimen of a warlike projectile when taken thence.

But, say you, chandeliers and babies do not bear much compression; nor do stewpans with smoking-hot contents readily squeeze into corners; and bonnets are not improved by crushing! Our answer to all this is—certainly not. These are mainly portfolio tricks; and, however large, they could not contain a tithe, at one time, of that which they give forth.

There is a process of refilling going on, over and over again, from the *servante*; and the engravings, baby's long-clothes, and other large things, handed out from time to time, serve to cover the operation of "loading." The only difficulty is the bit of animate nature—the boy or girl—to be fished out of the depths of the portfolio. Here the page—unconsciously-watchful ever!—is of great service; bungler as he is, he drops a cloth in front of the portfolio, and, at the same instant, the child is shot through a trap in the stage to the level of the back. The "careless" assistant picks up the cloth at once, but—the trick is done!

The clumsy fellow is also of much service in other ways. Suppose the magician to have collected several watches and placed them in a box purposely constructed for the changing of such articles. In one of the compartments some dummy watches lie concealed. The wizard sends the page for a plate, and then places upon it these latter in lieu of the borrowed articles: as the page returns from the "rake" to the stage he slips and falls forward, scattering what he carries about the stage. The plate is broken, the watches smashed, and the author of this disaster gets soundly rated by the irate magician; *Master Innocence* meanwhile scrambling over the stage collecting the fragments. These scraped together and delivered to his master, he marches off, blushing, with the box containing the real watches.

The conjurer is in a terrible way. How can he restore the mangled remains of the time-keepers to their respective owners? Impossible! Stay; a thought strikes him. He has an *Enchanted Picture Frame*, that (like the mill by which old folk were ground young again) will restore them to their perfect state once more! Young *Innocence* returns with the frame, and retires; the wizard loads his pistol with the *débris* of the plate and watches, and fires—point blank—at the place where the picture ought to be, and—lo!—there are the watches intact, and the plate whole, save for one little piece. "Dear me!" says the conjurer; "not all there? How strange!

ah, here is the missing piece on the stage." So he takes up a bit of broken delf, throws it at the frame, and the plate is seen to be perfect!

This trick has mainly depended for success upon the assistant, who seems only to have been the cause of discomfort. His premeditated fall broke the plate and scattered the dummy watches; and he took the real ones away, which, with a new "willow-pattern," he hung ready on the black back-ground of the picture-frame, merely leaving a piece of black cloth over one side of the plate so that it may appear as if a piece were out of it. Then he drew a black blind down in front of the articles to be discovered later on, and fastened it to await the liberating twitch of his string when the conjurer fired. A second quick pull at another string drew the black cloth off the edge of the plate, and revealed it whole, as the wizard seemed to throw—but in reality palmed—the missing piece. The minor part the latter took in the deception was borrowing the watches and placing them in a "changing drawer," his assumed anger at the fall of his assistant, and the remorseless ramming into the pistol of the remains of plate and watches. This firearm is unique amongst weapons, being perfectly inoffensive. It is in two parts; an inner tube contains the small charge, and between this and the outer case the "dummies" are placed and kept in position by a wad of paper.

Some conjurers make effective tricks out of chemical combinations. These are very pretty, but science enables too many to pick out the heart of the mystery now for it to be a favourite resort. Elastic bands enter very largely into the affections of a few professors; by the aid of such devices, what is to all outward appearance a strong cage with an undoubted live bird within it, may be made to collapse and be drawn so suddenly beneath the performer's coat as not to be visible in its passage. Conjurers' birds generally have a hard time of it, but those taking part in mere sensational feats are in as great danger of sudden death as are phenomenal ropedancers and trapezists! Assuredly the wizards would not expend labour without reward if they were to put their wits to work and make dummy birds as well as watches to save our feathered friends.

Some of the most telling "properties" of the conjuring fraternity are glass bowls used for various purposes. One, too old to create wonder now, but puzzling enough in its day, was changing a bowl of ink to clear water with gold fish swimming therein. This was and is managed by a black silk lining open at the bottom, fitting inside the bowl. This was taken for ink by the audience; but that they should be quite satisfied upon the point, the magician would produce a large empty spoon, dip it into the ink, and bring it out full. Now a cloth was thrown over the bowl and immediately drawn away again, when the ink appeared to have undergone a magical change, and "the nate little fishes" were discovered disporting in their natural element. Of course the conjurer withdrew the black silk lining inside the cloth, and the spoon was never really dipped in the glass bowl. The remainder of the secret, indeed, rests with the spoon, the handle of which was hollow with a tiny aperture at either end. This hollow part was filled with ink beforehand, and the top hole was secured by sealing-wax, so that until the wax was removed and air admitted the ink could not flow out at the bottom hole. The venerable *double-funnel* trick depends upon the same natural law, and in this wise, also, was the

conjurer able to detain or let flow at pleasure the wine in the *Inexhaustible Bottle*, a great attraction in its day.

The apparatus for this latter business was of japanned tin, resembling an ordinary quart bottle, and divided into compartments within, each having separate communications with the neck. Small holes were pierced through the case into each division, and were played upon by the performer as though he were "fingering" a flute. The raising of the fingers caused, not concord of sweet sounds to pour forth, but various wines in an unvarying gurgle. If the wizard found it necessary to replenish his stock, he had many expedients for doing so by the aid of filled duplicates from the backs of chairs, etc., and sometimes he elaborated the trick by pulling out yards and yards of ribbon, or by discovering a missing handkerchief in the bottle after he had seemed to break it with his wand. The handkerchief had, indeed, been neatly folded and lain concealed in a centre compartment, and the bottom part of the (tin) bottle, which came off in the performer's hand jagged as if broken, had been artfully jointed and arranged for the purpose.

Having digressed somewhat to mention the double-funnel principle, we may return to those existent bowl tricks requiring greater art and dexterity than some of old. Bowls brim full of water or blazing with fire are apparently produced from—nowhere! These are made flat, or saucer-shaped, and, when water is used, are of glass, their tops being covered by india-rubber stretched tightly over, and preventing the water spilling.

Two or three are secreted on the person of the magician, one in each breast of the coat, and a third in a bag hanging from the performer's waist and opening at the side. To perform this really startling feat the conjurer carries a large cloth, which he will frequently draw through his left hand with his right. (No bowls concealed there, evidently!) He will then throw the cloth over his left arm, and from beneath it produce bowl number one, previously taking off the elastic covering, of course. He goes through similar movements for numbers two and three, and may possibly obtain a fourth from the back of a chair. But now comes the crowning portion of the trick, and the illusion is certainly bewildering.

The cloth drawn through the magician's hands is partly double, so that within it there is a kind of triangular bag, from two of the corners to the centre. In this compartment is a loose ring, the exact size of the tops of the bowls. When the cloth is held in one position the ring falls into a corner, and it is grasped by the performer's right hand as he draws the other part of the cloth through his left. When he desires to make his *coup* he reverses the cloth, and the ring falls to the centre. He has here got the shape of the top of a bowl, and he carefully carries this down amongst the audience. Not very carefully, however, for he spills a little water, as if from the bowl, in his passage, for which he apologises. He had no necessity, however, as he deliberately squeezes the water out of a well-charged sponge, to quicken the imaginations of the spectators. He then suddenly throws the supposed bowl in the air, and great wonder is created at the marvellous disappearance. Seeing real bowls produced, full of real water, and noticing on this occasion the same shape in the cloth, and the "accidental" spilling of water, the minds of the audience are powerfully impressed with the

reality of what they have seen (though the eyes are ever "the fools of the other senses" at a conjuring exhibition), and they are still further baffled as the wizard shakes his cloth and passes it through his hand once more.

When the bowls are produced full of fire they are of metal instead of glass, and do not require any elastic covering. Tow steeped in spirits of wine is held at the bottom of the bowls by wires and ignited by the performer before its production from under the cloth.

It will have been noticed that the conjurer's *repertoire* ranges from tricks of extreme simplicity to others requiring much skill in manipulation, or calling upon science to assist in the mystification of the senses. Nevertheless, the puzzling effect of the simplest may be as great as of the more elaborate tricks. Of the first class may be reckoned the box from which a shilling vanishes in an astonishing manner. There is nothing remarkable about the box; it may have been the medium for the conveyance of pills to a dyspeptic subject in its time; but it must be of such a size as exactly to hold the coin intended to be placed in it. Say the shilling is marked and handed to the wizard, who, holding it in full view, places it in the box. At least he seems to do so, but, as usual, he substitutes another upon the back of which is pasted paper of the same colour as that lining the inside of the box. The papered side he holds towards himself while exhibiting the shilling, and he places this side upwards in the box. He shakes the box *up and down* when the lid is placed on it, and the coin rattles. He touches the box with his magic wand and commands the coin to pass to some other spot, or into some apparatus (where by this time the marked shilling has been placed, as likely as not, by the ubiquitous page). The conjurer now shakes the box *laterally*, and there is no sound, for the coin has really no room in which to rattle if the box be shaken sideways; he opens the box, which appears empty, for the papered side of the shilling is uppermost; he goes to the pre-arranged spot or apparatus, produces a coin, and asks, "Do you recognise your shilling, sir?" and of course the person addressed does so. Marvellous result from very small means! the mouse has brought forth a mountain. We do not say this precise trick would "serve" at a public performance, because it is too well known, and for that reason only, but equally simple contrivances still create wonder.

Electricity was at one time much used in the "profession," but its properties are so well known now, that little marvel can be raised by such means. Still this science enables the wizard to perform some good tricks. One of the most effective of these is the "crystal cash-box." This is made of transparent glass with a metal frame-work. The assistant carries it upon the stage, where it is hung up in full view of the audience. The performer again uses duplicates for the marked coins; and, in the act of throwing them into the box, palms them. The real coins have been conveyed from the platform by the page, and secured in an ornamental design on the glass top of the casket, before he returns with that crystal puzzle, which the public cannot see through. As the magician appears to throw the coins at the suspended casket, an assistant from behind, and by the aid of electricity, releases the bottom part of the ornamental design, and out drop the marked coins, while the flap instantly closes with a spring. The casket may be examined, and those who have marked coins will

find the same there, beyond doubt. The electric current has passed down the inside of the simple-looking curtain-cord by which the casket has been suspended, just as the *magic* drum gives out its *roulades* and answers the amusing questions of the magician.

A few, only, of the leading "properties" of the wizard's art have been here glanced at, but sufficient to show what ingenuity and perseverance may do with small means, and how—if we need not believe all we see in full day or gaslight—we may be much more sceptical in the darkened room of the "spirit-medium." Perhaps he has "properties," too, though he is not so honest as the legitimate juggler who openly deceives the senses.

Varieties.

PEASANT PROPRIETORS.—Mr. Rice Talbot, M.P., in writing to the "Times" about the land question, says: "When county elections were decided by the 40s. freeholder the peasant proprietor was in great request. At an election in Glamorgan-shire prior to the passing of the Reform Act, I well recollect how eagerly he was hunted up by the electioneering agents, and how they succeeded in rummaging out nearly a thousand voters of the class, for in those days there was no register of electors. And now I doubt whether among my constituents I could find a solitary instance of what could properly be called a peasant proprietor. Again, as further proof of the prevalence of the class in bygone times, I may state the fact that I possess upwards of a hundred conveyances of land which has been sold to me or to my predecessors, in quantities of from half an acre to ten acres, because the owners could not cultivate to a profit. Is it unreasonable to assume that a like state of things in other counties has operated in producing the same result? If so, the natural conclusion to be drawn is that the day of the peasant proprietor and of the small holder (except, perhaps, the holder of market gardens) is gone by. Machines for ploughing, sowing, scarifying, reaping, mowing, thrashing, etc., as now practised on all large farms, cannot be profitably made use of in small holdings. Besides which, it is well known that it is impossible to provide dwelling-houses and farm buildings for a small acreage except at ruinous loss. Gradually the little man has been elbowing out by the big one in agriculture, as he has been in manufactures and in shipping, and the idea of resuscitating him seems to me as absurd as would be that of replacing the railway train by the old mail coach."

RUSSIAN REGIMENTS IN TURKMAN WAR.—A curious instance of confident statement and conclusive reply lately appeared in regard to the Russian invasion of Turkestan. Professor Vambéry, of Pesth, asserted that the Russians craftily used the deep animosity of the Shiis against the Sunnite Mohammedans by employing regiments recruited by the Shiis of the Caucasus against Sunnite Turkomans. A Russian replies that the regiments, referred to by name, are infantry regiments belonging to the regular Russian army, are recruited all over Russia as for the whole army without any distinction, and consist principally of true Russians, belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church. There may be stray Mohammedans, Jews, Roman Catholics, and Protestants, representing the different nationalities in Russia, who enjoy perfect freedom of religion, but the bulk of these regiments are Russians belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church.

JEWISH POPULATION OF THE WORLD.—The fifty-sixth annual report of the Berlin Society for the Promotion of Christianity among the Jews contains some interesting statistics respecting the distribution of the Jews all over the world. The total number of the Hebrew race is to-day about what it was in the days of King David—between six and seven millions. There are in Europe, according to the latest statistical information, about five millions; in Asia, 200,000; in Africa, over 80,000; in America, from a million to a million and a half. More than half of the European Jews (2,621,000) reside in Russia;

1,375,000 in Austria (of whom 575,000 in the Polish province of Galicia); 512,000 in Germany (61,000 in the Polish province of Posen); Roumania is credited with 274,000, and Turkey with 100,000. There are 70,000 in Holland; 50,000 in England; 49,000 in France; 35,000 in Italy. Spain and Portugal have between 2,000 and 4,000; 1,800 in Sweden; 25 in Norway. Nothing is said about Denmark or Switzerland. The number of Jewish residents in Berlin is given at 45,000—nearly as many as in the whole of France and more than in Italy, Spain, Portugal, and the Scandinavian peninsula altogether. The majority of the African Jews live in the province of Algiers. But they are to be found in Abyssinia and all along the north coast, and even in the Saharan oases, frequently acting as intermediaries between the Mohammedans and Christians. Of the Asiatic Jews, 20,000 are assigned to India and 25,000 to Palestine. The population of Jerusalem is given at 7,000 Mohammedans, 5,000 Christians, and 13,500 Jews. These last are classified as German, Spanish, or Arabic Jews. The report gives no details concerning America, except that in New York there are 30 synagogues.

APPLE-PIE ORDER.—The saying, "To have everything in apple-pie order," is supposed to have its origin from the following circumstance: It was the custom many years ago to take off the top crust of an apple-pie and mash up the fruit with sugar and cream, then cut the crust into triangular pieces like soppits, and stick them end downwards into the fruit in various patterns, as circles, crowns, stars, etc. (see "Notes and Queries," 3rd s. vol. vii. p. 265.)

SNOW IN THE RIVIERA.—Among the abnormal events of last year's weather, it is recorded that snow fell and lay on the ground two inches deep, on the 1st December, at Bordighera. There had not been a snowfall for twenty-five years before. In some places there was ice an inch thick. The mountains were all covered with snow, which also fell at all the chief towns in the Riviera. Snow fell at Naples more than once during last January.

THE EFFECT OF COLD ON THE AGED.—In one day, during the early December frosts, the obituary of the "Times" illustrated the effect of the severe weather on the aged, and gave several remarkable instances of longevity. In the case of eleven persons—five ladies and six gentlemen—their united ages amounted to 954 years, giving an average of eighty-six years and more than eight months to each. The oldest was a gentleman who had reached the great age of ninety-eight years; the youngest of the same sex was eighty. Of the ladies the oldest was ninety-one, and the youngest eighty-one. There were also fifteen septuagenarians, whose ages averaged seventy-four years and more than seven months. That the ages of twenty-six persons in one day's obituary should average eighty years is a remarkable fact.

LECTURING ON THE PRESS.—Mr. Wendell Phillips recently addressed an audience of about 2,000 persons, assembled at Steinway Hall, New York, on the subject of "The Press and its Power." He stated that careful authorities estimate that 15,000,000 newspapers and books, the products of the press, are daily flooded before the eyes of the people of the world. He proceeded to point out that the newspaper is the exclusive literature of the masses. "To the millions it is literature, church, and college. Four out of five men seldom or never read a book. The daily press was to them counsellor and amusement. It was their whole." He had no doubt that "the material prosperity upon which we so much prided ourselves, the infinite invention, and the total subjugation of nature and its forces to the will of man, were almost exclusively due to the intellectual development which resulted from the press. It was the trained mind which the press produces. It was not the information solely that it communicated which gave it power. It was the following up of discussion, the intellectual leading of the press. It was the training of the mind that resulted in such alertment, such wide-awake, persistent, and unconquerable efforts to subjugate nature. In the course of three or four generations it had actually changed the brain of the race. Now the infant looked over its cradle, crawled out of it, and patented an improvement. It was not that 'golden band,' the Mississippi river, that cemented the union of forty states; it was the press and the telegraph; it was the oneness of intellectual life born of this many-headed monster which formed the cement of the Union." What would be the future of the press and how it would finally affect the great interests of civilisation, no man could pretend now to tell. Let them think of the press dropping an idea into

15,000,000 minds at once, and following it up day by day, surveying it from every point, illustrating it by anecdote and history, surveying it with logic or with sarcasm, making fun of it, making it personal, making it ethical, making it abstract, putting every possible form to it, adding it to every possible attraction for 300 successive days, and they could see how resistless to ordinary human nature must be such a power. "There was no responsibility in the press, except to each other. If editors were not jealous of each other, if the great journals of the country were not marshalled one against another, the contemplation would be fearful—worse than wealth, and infinitely worse than aristocracy, and more powerful than a hundred regiments. If the press could be united—if it were possible for 2,000 newspapers to agree—there would be an end to anything like individual liberty." "As it is," said the lecturer, "the tyranny is fearful. It undertakes and achieves so much that the danger is that we shall be tempted to leave all to it, and therein, and in that direction, lies one of the great dangers that beset the Republic. The danger of the press is that it should stereotype and limit the lines where progress should stop." The lecturer went on to protest against what he termed "the most oppressive influence the world has ever seen." He warned his audience against supposing that the press could ever do the work of individual citizenship, and called upon young men to "gird up their loins in the likeness of the noble men of the past," with an earnestness of purpose and a readiness of self-sacrifice which would do as much for their country now as their fathers did for it a hundred years ago.

"GOOD PLAIN COOKING."—In view of recent discussions on food and the various modes of preparing it, the following account of the experiences in this direction of four Englishmen in the course of an excursion from Bordeaux to Paris may be of some interest. The trip in question being almost entirely along the rivers of France, we were naturally compelled to put up at the riverside inns, which were often so out of the way that no Englishmen had ever been seen there if the account of the village veterans is to be believed. Yet, even at these places, we invariably (with one exception only) had a well-cooked dinner of several courses; soup, fish, meat, vegetables, salad and chicken, and dessert were generally to be had for three to three and a half francs. This variety of fare was further increased by the different styles of preparation. Fish are especially favoured in this respect. Small fish fried crisp, so as somewhat to resemble whitebait, though they were much coarser and larger, was a very favourite dish with us. An arrangement of fish in wine sauce, known as the *matelote*, was evidently regarded as a great delicacy by Frenchmen, but was looked upon with some suspicion by us. The meat was generally well cooked but not always tender. The same fault might be found with the inevitable *poulet*—owing, no doubt, to its having been killed immediately on our arrival—a process generally performed by letting it bleed to death head downwards, I regret to say, in order to give whiteness to the flesh. The vegetables formed a course by themselves, and were generally voted the best part of the dinner. Who would not prefer such a dinner as this to its ordinary English rival, when the whole is to be obtained, as I have said, at the rate of three to three and a half francs per head, wine *ad lib.* inclusive? The comparative effect upon us of an English dinner was distinctly shown on our arriving one night at an hotel the landlady of which had been in England, and consequently thought it necessary to give us an English dinner. Let the tourist, as a rule, avoid cooks who have been a short time in England, the prevalent idea being that raw beefsteaks form our staple food. Our hostess knew better than that, however, and, accordingly, we found ourselves before a well-done beefsteak, with boiled potatoes, followed by a duck. They were both fairly cooked; but the dinner was undoubtedly à l'Anglaise in the midst of France, and it was unanimously pronounced the worst of which we had partaken during our trip. Such is a traveller's experience in France—what it is at like places in England we most of us know. But it is the cook at home with whom we are chiefly concerned. It is a sorrowful fact that a French village woman can beat many a professed English cook with the same materials, which, with a few exceptions, are open to both. This is a grievance which has at last gained some recognition. The schoolmaster is abroad in the matter of cookery. For some time past he has been making his voice heard from the South Kensington Museum and other places. We can only hope that his efforts may be crowned with success, and that the time will come when the highest ambition of an ordinary cook will be to accomplish what is known to advertisers as "good plain cooking."